

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Caregiver Support Program
and Department of Defense (DoD)
Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018
Expanding Access to Military Commissaries, Exchanges and Recreation Facilities (MWR)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

January 2020

Q. Is the MISSION Act of 2018 and the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 (DoD Expanded Access MWR privileges) the same thing and/or are they connected in any way?

A: No. The MISSION Act of 2018 is directed and implemented by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 is directed and implemented by Department of Defense. The VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers is a clinical program where eligibility is based on the Veteran's assessment by a healthcare provider for need of a caregiver and the level of assistance needed. Veterans may apply for this program through their local facility or refer to <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/>, for more information.

Q. Who is eligible for DoD Expanded Access MWR privileges starting on January 1, 2020?

A. Veterans who meet other than non-caregiver criteria are:

- Purple Heart recipients
- Former Prisoners of War (POW)
- Veterans with 0-90% Service-Connected disability ratings
- Medal of Honor recipients and Veterans with 100% Service-Connected disability ratings who are already eligible under existing DoD policy
- **Caregivers who meet the criteria are:**
 - Individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregiver of an eligible Veteran under the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers beginning on January 1, 2020, will be eligible for these privileges.
 - For information about primary family caregivers, visit <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/>.

Q. Are DoD Expanded Access MWR privileges available to caregivers enrolled in the Program of General Caregiver Support Services?

A. No. Only the primary family caregiver of an eligible Veteran in VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers may use this benefit. Veterans may meet eligibility for DoD Expanded Access MWR privileges under other non-caregiver criteria.

Q. Are DoD Expanded Access MWR privileges available to secondary caregivers in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers?

A. No. An authorized caregiver must be the individual approved and designated as the primary family caregiver of an eligible Veteran under VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. Veterans may meet eligibility for DoD Expanded Access MWR privileges under other non-caregiver criteria.

Q. What is the definition of a primary family caregiver, as mentioned above?

A. The primary family caregiver is an individual designated as "primary provider of personal care services" for the eligible Veteran who has been approved for the VA's Program of

Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

Q. When should primary caregivers expect to receive their eligibility letters in the mail?

A. Letters for DoD Expanded Access MWR privileges were mailed to current eligible primary caregivers enrolled in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers in December 2019. New primary caregivers in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers will receive letters within a month of being approved for this program.

Q. Are Veterans who are from eras prior to Post-9/11 eligible to apply for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers now, if they are eligible for the DoD Expanded Access MWR privileges, under other non-caregiver criteria?

A. Although a Veteran may be eligible for DoD Expanded Access MWR privileges, VA is currently only accepting applications for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers from Post-9/11 era Veterans. The first phase of expansion of the VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers will occur when the VA Secretary has certified the new caregiver information technology system is fully implemented and final regulations are published. VA will begin expanding eligibility for this program Summer of 2020.

Q. If a Veteran is eligible for commissary services already or due to the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 (DoD Expanded Access MWR privileges), but it is difficult for the Veteran to go to the commissary due to their disability, may the Veteran register their caregiver in the VA Caregiver Support Program so that their caregiver may go to the commissary on the Veteran's behalf?

A: VA does not register Veteran caregivers for the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018. There's an eligibility and application process for the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. These VA and DoD programs are unrelated. If a Veteran who requires a caregiver is interested in applying for services under the Caregiver Support Program, they may visit <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/> for more information.

Q. Can a Veteran register their caregiver for the DoD Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 (DoD Expanded Access MWR privileges), through the VA Caregiver Support Program and/or VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers?

A: No. The VA does not register caregivers for the DoD Purple Heart and Disabled Equal Access Act of 2018. In addition, although a Veteran may be eligible for the DoD Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 (DoD Expanded Access MWR privileges), it does not automatically provide eligibility for Veteran caregivers for the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

Q. What services does VA offer for all caregivers of enrolled Veterans?

A. Caregivers are eligible for a host of VA services through the Program of General Caregiver Support Services. These services are available to caregivers of eligible Veterans of any era. The Program of General Caregiver Support Services includes training, education, respite care, a telephone support line, peer-support mentoring, self-care courses and other services. For information about the Program of General Caregiver Support Services visit <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/>.

****Please see <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/products#!/detail/780>, for more information related to the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 or call 1-800-342-9647 (Toll Free 24/7).**



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